

**Amendments to the Specification**

Please amend the specification, as follows:

Page 1, lines 1-2, replace the title paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

~~METHOD FOR PREPARING A~~ **CROSSLINKABLE ELASTOMERIC  
COMPOSITION AND METHOD FOR PREPARING THE COMPOSITION**

Page 1, line 3, add the following paragraph in the form of a section heading after the title “CROSSLINKABLE ELASTOMERIC COMPOSITION AND METHOD FOR PREPARING THE COMPOSITION” and prior to the paragraph beginning “The present invention relates to a method . . . .”

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

Page 1, line 3, add the following new paragraph after the heading “CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS” added above and prior to the paragraph beginning “The present invention relates to a method . . . .”

This application is a national-phase entry under 35 U.S.C. § 371 from International Application No. PCT/EP2002/012159, filed October 31, 2002, in the European Patent Office, the content of which is relied upon and incorporated herein by reference.

Page 1, line 3, add the following new paragraph in the form of a section heading after the cross-reference to related applications added above and prior to the start of the paragraph beginning “The present invention relates to a method . . . .”

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Page 1, line 3, add the following new paragraph in the form of a section subheading after the heading “BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION” added above and prior to the start of the paragraph beginning “The present invention relates to a method . . . .”

### Field of the Invention

Page 1, line 16, add the following new paragraph in the form of a section subheading prior to the start of the paragraph beginning “In the rubber industry . . . .”

### Description of the Related Art

Page 5, line 17, add the following new paragraph in the form of a section heading prior to the start of the paragraph beginning “However, the use of thermoplastic polymers . . . .”

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Page 23, line 31, add the following new paragraph in the form of a section heading prior to the start of the paragraph beginning “The present invention will now be illustrated . . . .”

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Page 24, line 12, add the following new paragraph in the form of a section heading prior to the start of the paragraph beginning “With reference to Fig. 1 . . . .”

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

Add a new page 51 after the claims, adding the following ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE. A new, separate page 51 including the ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE is enclosed.

#### ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A crosslinkable elastomeric composition includes at least one thermoplastic polymer selected from amorphous polymers having a glass transition temperature higher than 80° C or crystalline polymers having a melting temperature higher than 190° C and at least one diene elastomeric polymer. A method for preparing the composition includes pre-mixing, at a temperature not lower than  $T_g$  or  $(T_m - 20^\circ \text{C})$ , the at least one thermoplastic polymer with a first portion of the at least one diene elastomeric polymer to obtain a masterbatch and mixing the masterbatch with a remaining portion of the at least one diene elastomeric polymer. The

composition may include from 1% to 65% of the at least one thermoplastic polymer and from 35% to 99% of the at least one diene elastomeric polymer. The at least one thermoplastic polymer may be dispersed in a form of particles having an average diameter not greater than 20  $\mu\text{m}$ .